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ABSTRACT

This play, commissioned by Project Head Start, is designed to stimulate discussion and deepen understanding of key issues surrounding the confusion and conflicts that often arise when parents and professionals become entangled in disputes over "who is in charge" of the Head Start program. Guidelines for a discussion session following presentation of the play and suggested questions for the audience are provided. (KM)

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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PLAYS for LIVING(R) -- A Division of the Family Service Association of America

STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN: CHILDREN AHEAD

by

Nora Stirling

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Office of Child Development
Bureau of Head Start and Child Service Programs

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Summary

The purpose of the discussion session following the presentation of this play as with other PLAYS for LIVING dramas is to stimulate a lively pro and con debate over the key issues the play was designed to highlight. In STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN: CHILDREN AHEAD, these issues revolve around the confusion and conflicts that often arise when parents and professionals become entangled in disputes over "who is in charge" of the program. The play shows how stopping to listen to each other helps to work out conflicts.

Parent involvement may seem new from certain vantage points. However, from another point of view, it is as old as democracy itself.

STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN: CHILDREN AHEAD

GUIDE FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

Introduction

An important purpose of this play, commissioned by Head Start, is to stimulate discussion, air conflicts and deepen understanding. Live theatre can be a unique catalyst for this.

The play, STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN: CHILDREN AHEAD illustrates an idea that has come into its own during this decade -- the idea of citizen participation. This idea was written into the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 with the words "maximum feasible participation of the poor." Traditionally services have been planned for those in poverty, on the assumption that the educated and informed sector of the community knew better what the poor needed than they themselves did. Today there is an upsurge of demand by the poor to play an equal role in shaping their communities, their services and their lives. Where citizen participation is welcomed, program planners are finding that the mutual exchange is higly productive.

One of the programs which has pioneered in encouraging full participation is Head Start. The parents are expected to play a part in setting

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policies, determining the program and planning activities for themselves. To achieve such participation, directors and other staff and themselves playing new roles. They must share responsibility and plan the program with the parents instead of for them. Almost all professional have felt some degree of discomfort in this new kind of partnership, but have enjoyed enormous rewards when that partnership is achieved.

This play depicts a Head Start director in the throes of moving from the attitude of "planning for" to "planning with" the parents and paraprofessional staff who also in turn -- well-that is what the play is all about.

BACKGROUND

Head Start was designed in 1965 to be the first vital step toward breaking the cycle of poverty. The comprehensive program relates directly to every child's future life. It is a foundation for his full-term education, employment potential, and often his health and social well-being. The program contains eight major components: Education, Parent Involvement, Nutrition, Health, Social Services, Volunteering, Psychological Services and Career Development.

Strong, healthy and still pioneering, Head Start six years later is synonymous with innovative preschool child development efforts. In 1971, it has joined numerous other child and parent programs long supported by caring Americans in a newly established Office of Child Development, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. In-service training for all staff members is an essential feature of Head Start. STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN: CHILDREN AHEAD was designed as an important new training

tool for Head Start staff, parents and the general public.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

(Some Do's and Don'ts)

As one rises to face an audience that has just seen this play, several things should be borne in mind. First remember that the audience must shift from being the observer to the participant. This psychological shift should be aided by the discussion leader, but do not be dismayed if the audience is fairly quiet at first and slow to join the discussion. Give them time to shift gears.

Another point to bear in mind is that discussion is diminished by the question-answer format. Therefore, comments rather than questions should be sought from the audience. If a question is asked, it is best for the discussion leader to rephrase it in such a way that others in the audience can comment. The leader should avoid the role of the authority answering individual questions.

It is best to steer clear of encouraging the audience to play drama critic. They should be encouraged to discuss the issues the play brings out, rather than the merits of the actors or the playwright.

In many meeting rooms and auditoriums, it will be necessary for the leader to repeat comments so that everyone can hear.

In planning the meeting, it is wise to avoid panels to lead the discussion. Such a device usually discourages audience participation.

Bear in mind that afterwards people remember best the points they themselves discussed. In a very real way, discussion is learning.

Some Questions to Put to the Audience

The best way of getting the audience into discussion is to toss out questions. The questions should seek opinions, not answers. Furthermore they should be phrased so as to elicit discussion, not a "yes" or "no" response.

The following questions are samples which you may find helpful:

1. Was the play true to life? How?
2. What are some of the things the play said to you?
3. What difference does it make to a child that his parents are "involved" in his activities?
4. What difference does it make to the parents that they are involved?
5. What do you think motivated Tom at the beginning when he made all the plans himself?
6. How do you feel about letting teenagers dance in the family room of a government-supported program for poor people?
7. When Tom said, "So -- I'll leave the whole thing to you. It's in your hands," do you feel he was acting irresponsibly? Where does responsibility for a program ultimately rest? To what extent is the grantee and delegate agency responsible? The director? The parents?
8. What is the difference between being in an advisory role and being in an administrative role?
9. Who do you think was instrumental in helping Tom make the "giant leap" to a new view of the parents' role?
10. What is the value of having neighborhood people and parents employed in the center?
11. In what other programs, organizations and institutions do you feel the involvement of parents would benefit the children?

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[2] Based on Memorandum to Discussion Leaders by Dr. Nina Ridenour, Ph.D. Copyright by Nina Ridenour, 1953.

PURPOSE OF PLAYS

The plays written and produced under the auspices of PLAYS for LIVING, Family Service Association of America, are intended to give dramatic emphasis to the situations in the community which need recognition, greater understanding, discussion, and at times action. These plays are written by professionals from the theatre, in conference with authorities in the various fields under consideration so that the content of the plays will be sound. In any community there are many points of view. These plays are not ends in themselves, but are written to stimulate discussion. PLAYS for LIVING believes that such discussion offers opportunity for exploring divergent points of view and leads both to clarification and new comprehension of the problem presented.

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STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN

CHILDREN AHEAD

PRODUCTION NOTES TO THE DIRECTOR

The prime purpose in the production of this play is to bring about a greater understanding between the two disparate elements in the Head Start program, equally well-intentioned but lacking in the necessary communication. It hopes to clear up (a) the lack of understanding between the professional (who is generally a member of the middle class), and the indigenous people of the community (the poorer class), and (b) the conflict that arises when policy making is shared by the recipient of service and the administration.

Please keep clearly in mind that the play is not, repeat not, about race relations. In whatever part of the country it is played, with whatever mixture of races it is cast, there must never be any suggestion of racial mistrust or hostility in the acting. To allow that to enter would be to lose the whole point of the play. This mistake is specially to be guarded against in the scenes between Tom and Mary.

It should be remembered that the people know each other well and, with the exception of Lucy, are comfortable and easy with each other. Therefore, the pace must be kept brisk and lively. And whenever a character is played with an accent, care must be taken that however authentic the accent, it is never strong enough to be hard to understand.

IMPORTANT This play will be produced in many parts of the United States and various different ethnic groups may be represented in the cast.

Since the original New York cast included Negroes and Puerto Ricans some of the verbal expressions reflect that fact. It is suggested, however, that with different ethnic casting the names and expressions be changed accordingly.

CONNIE

Though Connie's role does not have the emotional highlights of the others she is actually the key person in the situation around which the play revolves. Her playing (and therefore her casting) must be especially truthful, for she is the character who will be most closely watched and identified with by the Head Start audiences. Her manner, her costumes, even the condition of her fingernails, will be scrutinized critically. Connie, paid aide to the program though she is, is neither pure professional nor pure parent; she is a combination of both, with the interests of both and loyalties to both. But she started as a member of the poor community, and this she primarily remains. Thus she must not suggest that in moving up to the staff-member status she has moved so far as to be alien to the people she represents. She must not be "smart" in appearance or manner, nor seem better educated or more affluent. In particular she must not wear a mini skirt or slacks, nor have painted fingernails.

MARY

Mary's role is written so as to bring out into the open the point of view of those Head Start parents who have the least sympathy with the professional in the program. She expresses the feelings of many in the

audience, and it is hoped they will identify with her. But, when expressing her disapproval, she must, in the theatrical phrase, "play against" her own lines, for to project a snarling or unpleasant personality would alienate the audience that they will unconsciously refuse to identify with her. Mary is, in fact, a good-natured, outgoing, all-cards-on-the-table woman, with a quick temper -- quick to flare up and equally quick to subside. Hearty, full of fun and enthusiasm, she never bears grudges, and her scenes with Tom carry no personal digs nor any hostility or resentment. Not a thinking person, she acts on impulse, without taking time for thought, and her pace is therefore fast-moving and dynamic.

TOM

Tom represents the professional Head Start director -- not all of them, of course, but the ones who have not yet reached a full understanding of the subtle and complex requirements of the job. Though young and still inexperienced, he is sincerely interested in his work, likes it and is totally committed to doing it well. But the facet of it peculiar to Head Start -- the sharing of responsibility with people who have not had his formal training -- has not penetrated his consciousness. This he still has to learn. And this, in the course of the play, is one of the chief things we see taking place. When he flares up at Mary there must never be any contempt or talking down. He is, indeed, utterly without any sense of social, cultural or racial differentness in his relations with the three women.

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LUCY

Lucy gives the impression, at first glance, of being dull and uninterested even in her own children's needs. This lethargy, however, is simply the numbing weariness of being trapped in a hopeless situation. When she glimpses a way out she comes to life, and though still tentative and unsure of herself, she suggests at the end that not only she, but through her the unhappy little Tony, will finally make a better adjustment to life. Her transformation, however, must not be so drastic as to be unbelievable. While her clothing betrays her poverty, she is not actually sloppy in appearance, and if she is cast as a member of any special ethnic group she should be costumed appropriately.

STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN

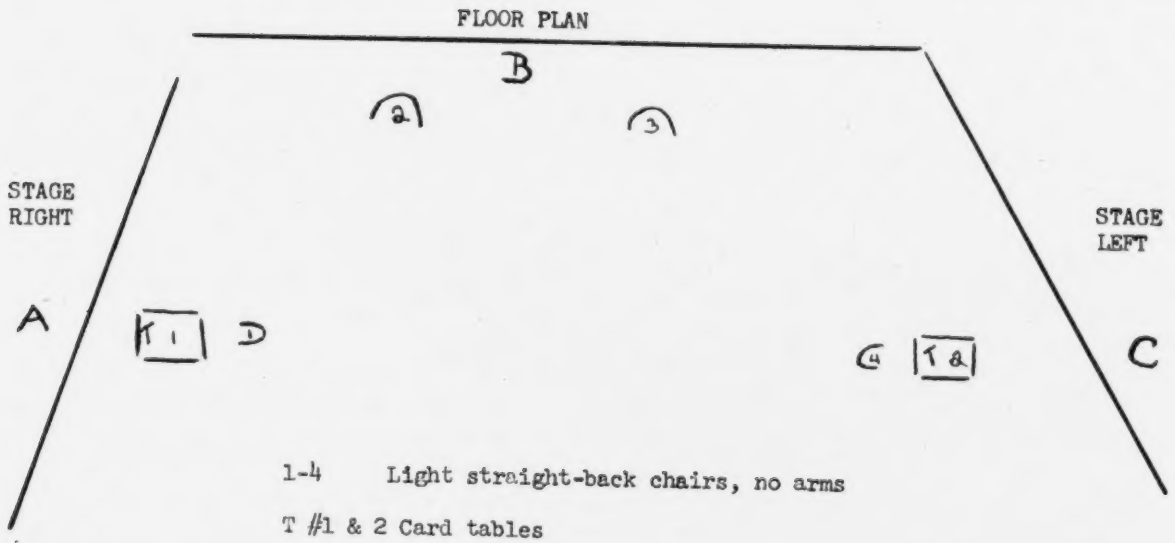
CHILDREN AHEAD

CAST

TOM RAYMOND	The director of the program. Not over thirty
CONNIE COLEMAN	A parent-program aide (para-professional). A young mother about twenty-seven.
MARY BELL	A mother. About thirty-five. Chairman of PAC, Policy Advisory Committee.
LUCH LEE	A mother. About thirty-five.

NOTE

Person introducing play should end introduction with line about "The scene is the office of the director of the Head Start program."



1-4 Light straight-back chairs, no arms

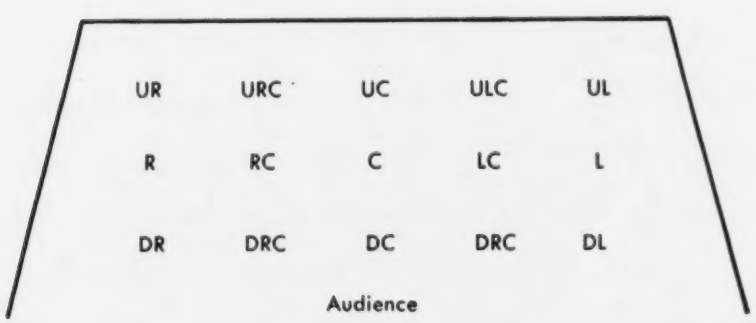
T #1 & 2 Card tables

A & C Exits

B Imaginary window

GENERAL STAGE DIRECTIONS

Stage directions are always written from the actor's viewpoint, in indicating "right" and "left." "Downstage" means the section nearest the audience, and "upstage" the section nearest the back wall of the playing space. The chart below will be helpful in making clear the different stage areas referred to in the script. Abbreviations are used as follows: R, right; L, left; C, Center; D, downstage or down; U, upstage or up.



Audience

A "cross" or "X" refers to an actor's moving from one part of the stage to another. All crosses, unless otherwise indicated, are made "below" (downstage of) any other actors standing in the path of the movement, rather than "above" (upstage, in back of) that person.

TOM: (COMES IN RIGHT, TAKES OFF JACKET, HANGS IT ON CHAIR # 1. SITS).

CONNIE: (COMES IN LEFT, SETS PURSE ON FLOOR UPSTAGE TABLE # 2).

TOM: Good Morning, Connie. (LOOKS AT HER)

CONNIE: Good morning, Tom.

TOM: (TURNS AND LOOKS AT HER) What's the matter?

CONNIE: It's Tony again. (XING CENTER)

TOM: What this time?

CONNIE: He just threw a building block at Dora and hit her on the head.

TOM: (RISES AS IF TO GO) Oh. Is she hurt?

CONNIE: (CALMING GESTURE). No, she's all right. A little cut. We patched her up. But Tony...He kept running around, "looking for his mother," he said. Miss Garret tried to get him interested in finger painting but he went wild. He knocked over the pitcher of juice - and finally he threw the block at Dora.

TOM: Poor kid.

CONNIE: She's all right. It's just a skin cut.

TOM: I meant Tony. A band-aid'll fix Dora up, but Tony needs more than that. I've <u>got</u> to talk to his mother. You arranged to get her in, didn't you?

CONNIE: Yes, she's finally coming. One of the driver aides was to pick her up at nine this morning. She ought to be here already. (X'S TO WINDOW TO LOOK).

TOM: (LOOKS AT WATCH). Oh. I hope she gets here soon. I've got an appointment with a man, Jim Rudy. He's coming by on his way to work.

CONNIE: (XING TO CHAIR #4) I hope so. But this is the third time I've fixed it up for her. She backed out both times before.

TOM: If she doesn't make some sort of relationship with the Center, Tony'll never get adjusted. I tried to explain that to her when we recruited him, but (HE SHRUGS) it didn't work.

CONNIE: It <u>is</u> hard for her to get away, of course. That husband of hers, sick so long she can't hardly leave'em.

TOM: (AGREEING). I know.

CONNIE: All those kids, and a new baby to look after.

TOM: Sure it's tough. It would be better for everyone if Tony could make the adjustment. He's miserable here, poor kid, and you can't blame him...dumped down once or twice a week by his brothers...and then left alone among a bunch of strangers...his mother's the one person that means safety to him. (XING TO WINDOW). If she'd <u>bring</u> him for a while, he'd know he belonged here. Then he'd be O.K.

CONNIE: Yes, I remember that's how it was with my Harry when he was in Head Start, even before I was a Head Start aide myself. I sure wish she'd try, there's plain hell every time that kid walks in that door.

TOM: (LOOKS OUT OF THE "WINDOW") Oh, there's Rudy's truck (XING TO CHAIR #1 AND PUTTING ON COAT). Look, Connie, if Mrs. Lee

TOM (CONT.): comes before I get back, don't let her go. Talk to her. See what you can do. (GOES OUT RIGHT).

CONNIE: (GOES TO WINDOW, LOOKS OUT). Rudy? Now who's he? (LUCY ENTERS LEFT). (CONNIE SEES HER, WELCOMES HER QUICKLY). Oh, hello, Lucy. Wait a minute. (RUNS TO EXIT RIGHT, CALLS). Tom! (HE'S GONE. SHE DECIDES NOT TO TRY TO GET HIM). He had to go, Lucy; some business thing. (PULLING CHAIR #1 TO CENTER.) Sit down. He said to ask you to wait.

LUCY: (X'S TO CHAIR AND SITS). I can't stay long. My husband's real bad this morning, and the kids was all over.

CONNIE: (SITS CHAIR #4). Oh, I thought Anna'd be there, this being school vacation.

LUCY: (DISGUST). Anna!

CONNIE: She won't baby-sit?

LUCY: She won't do nothing. She ain't never home. You ought to hear how she talks to me...like dirt. 'Shut up,' she say. 'I'm migh' near grown, she say. I'm going to do like I want.' And the little kids is all starting to do like she do.

CONNIE: (SHAKES HER HEAD SYMPATHETICALLY). It's hard, I know. But, Lucy, Mr. Raymond wants so bad for you to come in here with Tony... If we fixed up for the driver to bring you...and got you a baby-sitter...? It wouldn't be for long, just for like a few days...I mean just till he got used to being here in this new place with new people, and away from you.

LUCY: Why do I got to do it? His brothers brings him.

CONNIE: (GENTLY). Not very often, they don't. And that ain't the same, anyway. You're the one that counts.

LUCY: I never taken the other kids to school.

CONNIE: (EAGERLY). I know. I didn't take my oldest boy when he started school, either, and he had a real bad time at first.

LUCY: How you mean?

CONNIE: He was scared like and he fought with the other kids, and couldn't seem to learn. I was real worried. Then we got Head Start here, and I brought Harry.

LUCY: Thats the young one?

CONNIE: Yeah. It's kind of a nuisance, bringing a kid yourself every day at first, but it's not for long and it's sure worth it. He had such a good year in Head Start that when he started school the teacher said she couldn't hardly, believe he was from the same family. He made friends right off and was interested and really wanted to learn. I think Tony could be like that too, instead of...(SHE CHECKS HERSELF, GLANCES AT LUCY TO SEE IF SHE IS INSULTED).

TOM: (ENTERS RIGHT INTERRUPTING THE CONVERSATION. HE IS VERY DISTRAUGHT BUT CONCEALS IT FROM THE WOMEN. WHEN HE SEES LUCY HE TRIES TO BE POLITE). Oh, Hello, Mrs. Lee. I'm sorry I had to go out for a minute.

LUCY: (RISING). It don't matter.

TOM: Oh, please...(HE LOOKS FROM HER TO CONNIE. CONNIE IS UNCERTAIN

TOM (CONT): ABOUT THE SITUATION). Won't you stay a minute.

LUCY: I got to go...Get home. (XING TO EXIT LEFT).

TOM: (NOT ACTUALLY ANXIOUS FOR HER TO STAY NOW. HE DOES NOT PRESS HER). Well...(A FRIENDLY SMILE). Well, I hope we'll be seeing you around here a little more. (HE LOOKS INQUIRINGLY AT CONNIE WHO RISES).

CONNIE: (LOOKS UNCERTAIN). I told her you thought Tony'd be happier...

LUCY: Yeah...She told...uhuh. Well...(SHE MOVES TO DOOR LEFT).

CONNIE: (SEES THEY HAVE GOT NOWHERE, X'S TO LUCY). Well, the driver's out there. He'll take you on home. Thanks for coming.

TOM: Yes. Thanks. We'll see you. (LUCY EXITS LEFT). You get anywhere?

CONNIE: Not an inch.

TOM: (CROSSING ABOVE CHAIR #4). Damn! (CONNIE LOOKS AT HIM SHARPLY). Connie, do you know what's just happened?

CONNIE: What?

TOM: I just picked up my mail as I came in. I got a letter from the regional office. They may cut off our funds. (XING TWO STEPS TOWARD CONNIE).

CONNIE: <u>What</u>?

TOM: (XING UP CENTER STAGE AND TRYING TO SUPPRESS HIS GREAT DISTRESS). You remember all those questions about parent-involvement?

CONNIE: Yes?

TOM: They say we haven't got any that's really meaningful. It's

not decide yet, but...this may be the end. (THEY STARE AT EACH OTHER, DISMAYED).

CONNIE: (A KIND OF WAIL). Oh, my God! (SITS CHAIR #4).

TOM: (AN INDIGNANT PAUSE. THEN HE BURSTS OUT). Damm it! What do they expect anyhow? This is the first time there's ever been such a thing as a war on poverty, and they expect everything to work out perfectly all at once.

CONNIE: I know.

TOM: No parent-involvement! (XING DR.). My God, I've knocked myself out trying to get these parents involved. Like that Mrs. Lee! (X'S DL). They're just not interested - you talk and talk and they just look at you. (X'S TO CONNIE). They don't discuss your ideas, they just nod Yes and then go on as if you'd never opened your mouth. (X'S RIGHT). Take those sewing machines.

CONNIE: I know .

TOM: Four perfectly good reconditioned machines. (XING TO CONNIE). And has one single mother ever been in to use them? (CONNIE SHRUGS DISMALLY. TOM X'S RIGHT). And those Consumer Reports. With prices the way they are you'd think anybody would want to learn how to save money. (XING TO WINDOW WITH A HOPELESS GESTURE). I dunno, Connie, I've thought, I've really tried. (XING DOWN CENTER). That Mrs. Lee...I even got a heavy-duty machine because I knew she'd worked in an upholstery shop and (XING TO CONNIE). I thought she and some of the

women might like to make things for the house.

CONNIE: (NODS). And I thought it was such a good idea.

TOM: I tell you one thing...I'll never take another Head Start job. (BANGS CHAIR #1 ON FLOOR. NODS GRIMILY They want parent-involvement here. (XING TO TABLE #1 AND PUSHES CHAIR #1 UNDER IT). Well, at the national conference I heard some directors talking about parent involvement. They had it. And believe me, they had had it! Some places, the parents just come in and take over, "do this, we want that." One case, they fired the director and just ran the whole thing themselves.

CONNIE: I've heard about that.

TOM: (XING TO CONNIE). What's the good of having professional training if they know as much about running things as you do?

CONNIE: I sure hope the office changes their mind.

TOM: (XING TO "WINDOW"). What will happen to all these kids if they don't? I don't care what anybody says, they are being helped here, they are brighter and more with it...

CONNIE: Sure they are. I just told Lucy, the difference in my own two boys.

TOM: Now they'll be right back where they started from. (SITS CHAIR #2).

CONNIE: (XING TO TOM). It ain't only the kids that'll lose out (XING TO TOM).

You'll get another job easy. But the program...! What about all of us mothers and aides and all? We were getting ahead, too, same as the kids.

TOM: It's rough for all of us. (HE SHAKES HIS HEAD IN DISCOURAGEMENT. XING ABOUT TABLE #1). Damn it, I wish I knew what we could do. (HE DELIBERATELY SHAKES OFF THIS MOOD AND TAKES UP THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS. HE HANGS HIS JACKET ON CHAIR #1. STARTS ROLLING UP SLEEVES). Well, I'd better get moving. I've got to scrub some dirty words off the classroom wall.

CONNIE: (SURPRISED. XING TO TOM). Dirty words?

TOM: Some teen-aged kids were in there last night hacking around and they left it a shambles.

CONNIE: Who was it, do you know?

TOM: Anna Lee was one. She wrote her name and some Joe's all over the walls in lipstick. It's the devil to get off.

CONNIE: (SAD LITTLE SMILE). This is some day, ain't it? (SITS CHAIR #4).

TOM: (FIXES PAPERS ON DESK #1). I'll be glad to get away for the weekend. Maggie and I are taking the kids to see their grandmother. It'll be great...grass and cows and chickens and (LOOKING AT CONNIE) no Head Start parents. (CONNIE SMILES). I don't mean that. (X'S TO "WINDOW"). I love it here. I'd miss those little kids like hell. (UP AT "WINDOW"). Hey, Tony's whacking Chester over the head again. (CONNIE X'S TO "WINDOW"). Maybe you'd better go and help Betty pull'em

apart. (CONNIE X'S TO DOOR LEFT). He keeps things lively anyway. (XING TO DOOR RIGHT).

CONNIE: And how! (THEY GIVE EACH OTHER A DIM LITTLE SMILE AND EXIT).

SCENE II

(MARY AND CONNIE WALK IN TOGETHER).

MARY: (XING CONNIE AND POINTING TO CHAIR #1). Well...?

CONNIE: I told him you wanted to see him. He's in the classroom talking to Mr. Rudy. (XING ABOVE CHAIR #4).

CONNIE: I don't know. I never saw him till this morning. It's some new plan, I guess.

MARY: (ANNOYED). Another plan. (TURNS CHAIR FRONT AND SITS). You watch. I can just hear him. (MOCKING). "Now you all listen to what I've fixed up for you."

CONNIE: I don't know what it's all about.

MARY: Sure you don't. He don't never tell you nothing. Just suddenly hands you something on a platter, you're suppose to fall over with joy. Like what I came in about.

CONNIE: What? (SITS CHAIR #4).

MARY: I'm suppose to be chairman of the PC, right?

CONNIE: Sure.

MARY: And if it is a policy committee the chairman suppose to advise about policy, right?

CONNIE: Sure.

MARY: Well, he don't even let me advise about meetings. Yesterday my Alexander come home with a note pin to his chest, "meeting Policy Committee Tuesday, 3 p.m." Just like that, 3 p.m., just when the kids are all coming home from school. All the mothers are on my neck, giving me hell. I told him plenty of times, afternoon's no time for meetings. He don't listen. He's the big boss, he knows best.

CONNIE: Well. He's the professional, I guess he...

MARY: Sure, throwing his college degree at you. All them big words. Sometimes I think he don't want you to understand, you might tell him he's wrong. And if you do tell him something, make a suggestion, there's always some law in Washington, or some baloney from regional why you can't do it.

CONNIE: Mary, listen I know how it is. But really, sometimes there is a reason.

MARY: Oh, you always take up for him. Listen, you're a parent too, you ought to see our side. But just because he's your boss he's got you snowed.

CONNIE: (INDIGNANTLY). He has not. I know he ain't always right.

MARY: Well, he won't listen to nobody. That's his trouble. (RISING AND XING TO CONNIE). I ain't the only one that's mad. All the women is sore at him. This meeting for instance...when they found out he was the one that called it for three, they said, Well, we just won't go. So Tuesday, three o'clock, he'll be there waiting and nobody ain't going

to show up. That'll fix him.

CONNIE: Oh, Mary, don't do that. Please.

MARY: Listen, Connie. This program's suppose to be for us, right? The government said this is for the parents and the kids, right?

CONNIE: For the kids...and for the parents <u>because</u> of the kids.

MARY: (IMPATIENTLY). The parents are the ones got to do the talking. And I know the rules. We don't have to jump through no hoops everytime the director hollers. Tom wants a meeting, he can find a time that suits us. (SITS CHAIR #1).

CONNIE: (A PAUSE). Mary, I've got to tell you something. (RISING AND XING TO MARY).

MARY: What?

CONNIE: IT's serious. It could be the end of this whole thing.

MARY: The program? You mean...?

CONNIE: This morning he got a letter from the regional office. They said there wasn't enough parent involvement here and they might cut off our funds.

MARY: (A LOW AWED EXCLAMATION). Wow!

CONNIE: There might not <u>be</u> any more Head Start here.

MARY: No classes...or teachers...or playrooms?

CONNIE: Nothing.

MARY: (RISING, XING TO CONNIE). Not enough parent involvement, huh? (LOOKS OFF R) Well, whose fault is that, for Pete's sake?

CONNIE: I guess they blame Tom. It's up to him to sort of pull things together. But it just kills me to think of this place folding up. (XING TO CHAIR #4 AND SITTING).

MARY: (GRADUALLY TAKING IT IN). This is really something. (SUDDENLY VEHEMENT, XING TO CONNIE). They can't do this to us! My God, I'm having enough trouble with my <u>big</u> boy without having my little ones running wild too!

CONNIE: (SURPRISED). Billy?

MARY: This past year! I used to think little kids was a bother, but I'll trade you one big one for three little ones...if you got a place like this to keep them in.

CONNIE: Lucy Lee's got trouble with her Anna too.

MARY: I know it, that's why I brought her to Head Start. (XING TO "WINDOW"). At least you can keep the little ones out of trouble here...they don't have to go roaming all over. (XING BELOW DESK #1). But fifteen, sixteen, they got to move with the crowd, go dancing, see a movie. And if they don't <u>have</u> nothing but the street or a hallway...Lord! If I'm going to have to worry about all five at once I'm gonna jump the track. (SITS ON EDGE OF DESK #1).

CONNIE: Well, Regional didn't say positively...It was like a warning, I guess.

MARY: Who they warning, him or us?

CONNIE: Him <u>and</u> us.

MARY: Ain't our fault. He better...(X'S TO CONNIE AND HEARING

TOM OFF STAGE, STOPS).

TOM: (COMING IN RIGHT. HE GREETS MARY CORDIALLY). Hello, Mary, How're you today?

MARY: I heard the news.

TOM: Yes. It's bad. But it's not final yet. (WITH A RETURN OF GOOD SPIRITS. HE X'S TO CHAIR #2 AND PLACES IT CENTER STAGE FOR MARY WHO SITS). Listen, sit down. Let me tell you what I've just fixed up for you. Maybe this'll make you feel better. (STANDING BETWEEN CONNIE AND MARY. MARY AND CONNIE LOOK AT EACH OTHER). Connie, you know that fellow Rudy that was just here.

CONNIE: Yes?

TOM: Well, I've made a deal. (TO BOTH). You know the way the classroom gets messed up at night with the teen-agers smashing up the toys. (TO MARY). Just last night a bunch of them broke the kids' barrel drum and scattered the puzzles all over the floor. (MARY NODS. HE GOES ON WITH INCREASING ENTHUSIASM). Well, I believe I've got the answer. I talked the dental society into giving the kids their examinations free. It took a little arm twisting, but they finally said O.K. So that way we save $140 out of the budget. I thought I might have to get approval from the regional office but then I figured that $140 is less than 10% of that line item, so I didn't even have to ask. (XING ABOVE TABLE #1, THEN DR.). I made a deal with that

fellow Rudy...he's a carpenter and he's going to build us some cupboards along the wall. And then we can lock up the things and keep them from getting messed up. (HE PAUSES, PLEASED, WAITING FOR THEIR RESPONSE). How about that?

MARY: (AFTER A SILENCE, RISES). You got a hundred and forty dollars?

TOM: Yes, saved it out of the budget.

MARY: (XING TO L OF DESK #1). And you're gonna spend it on cupboards?

TOM: Yes.

MARY: Cupboards?

TOM: (SOMEWHAT TARTLY). What's the matter with that? Save the kids' toys.

MARY: (INCREDULOUS) A hundred and forty dollars, and you're...my Lord! (X'S C).

TOM: (SHARPLY ANNOYED, X'S TO R OF DESK). You don't want them, huh? So, here we go again. Like the sewing machine and the consumer's reports and everything else. What do you folks want, anyhow? Do you know? Or do you just not want what I want to give you?

MARY: (X'S L OF DESK). Sure we know. There's plenty of things. But one of them ain't you giving it to us.

TOM: Oh, what nonsense. I'm not giving you anything. I'm just trying to do my job. And it seemed to me that, with the toys getting...

MARY: It seemed to you! That's what I'm kicking about.

TOM: (DISGUSTED). You mean you want them to get broken?

MARY: I mean we might want things you never thought about. We're people, we got our own ideas.

TOM: (IMPATIENTLY). I know you're people. But how many times in PC meetings have I said, "Now who has an idea about how to do this or that?" and there wouldn't be a word?

MARY: It's always something you started. You want us to follow you like a bunch of kids.

TOM: My God, you talk as if I were some kind of dictator.

MARY: Oh, damn it, you never listen. (SWINGS ANGRILY AWAY AND X'S TO CONNIE). Connie, you know what I mean. I talk and he never takes any notice. (XING ABOVE TABLE #2).

CONNIE: (WITH A GESTURE OF APPEAL TO TOM). Tom...

TOM: (STILL ANGRY). What?

CONNIE: (GENTLY). Couldn't you...?

TOM: What? (LOOKS AT HER SHARPLY, THEN AT MARY, THINKING HARD. THERE IS A PAUSE WHILE HE ADJUSTS HIS MIND TO A NEW POINT OF VIEW. WHEN HE SPEAKS TO MARY THERE IS A NEW INQUIRING ATTITUDE). You say you've got your own ideas.

MARY: (STILL WARY). Yeah.

TOM: You mean there are other things you'd rather do with that money.

MARY: I'll say.

TOM: (REALLY WANTING TO KNOW). Well, like what?

MARY: (BEGINNING TO BELIEVE HIM, X'S BELOW CHAIR CENTER). You mean you really want to know?

TOM: Yes, I do.

MARY: Well! (ENTHUSIASM). A hundred and forth dollars and no strings! Come on, Connie, what do we want most? (SHE SITS CENTER CHAIR. CONNIE LAUGHS. NOT WAITING FOR CONNIE). I'll tell you what we want. We was just talking about it. We want some place where our teen-age kids can go, some decent place off the street. Like where they can dance and have a good time and not get in trouble.

TOM: (INSTINCTIVELY MAKING AN OBJECTION). But how can I do anything about that?

MARY: You don't have to do nothing. Just listen. You get a hundred and forty dollars, right? (HE NODS). And you want some cupboards for the kids' toys, right?

TOM: Yes.

MARY: Well, look. Most of us women have men folk around the house. They're just as worried about the kids as we are. They want to help. That right, Connie?

CONNIE: Sure. Ellis'd do anything.

MARY: My Clifford too. (TO TOM RISING). So Connie and me, we'll call a special meeting of the PC and they'll get a few of the men together. They'll come in here and they'll make the cupboards. You pay us what you'd have paid Rudy. (IN TRIUMPH, XING TO CONNIE). And then we can buy us a

stereo for the family room!

CONNIE: (INSTANTLY DELIGHTED, RISES). Mary, that's great.

MARY: A great big thing with a changer and amplifier and everything.

CONNIE: The kids will love that.

TOM: (PUZZLED, UNSOLD). You mean have the teen-agers dancing in the family room?

MARY: Why not? We don't use it at night, and that beat up old thing somebody gave us conks out if you look at it.

CONNIE: (EAGERLY CARRYING ON). Oh, Mary, it's a terrific idea.

TOM: But...you wouldn't have $140 after you bought the lumber.

MARY: Oh, shoot, we could get lumber cheap.

TOM: Where?

MARY: (WAVING OFF HIS OBJECTIONS). We'd find it. We could borrow a truck and get odds and ends from the lumber yard.

TOM: (STILL HAVING DIFFICULTY GOING ALONG). But...are any of your men carpenters?

MARY: Oh shoot, anybody can put up some cupboards. You don't want'em fancy, do you? Just shelves with doors. Right?

TOM: Well, yes, but...

MARY: (TO CONNIE). Cliff'd be insulted if I asked him could he make a cupboard. Wouldn't your Ellis?

CONNIE: Sure would.

MARY: (LAUGHING WITH ENJOYMENT). Cliff say no, I'd divorce him. But what I love is painting.

CONNIE: (EAGERLY). Oh yes. Tom, you'd want the cupboards painted, wouldn't you?

TOM: I guess so.

MARY: (LAUGHING GOOD HUMOREDLY). Now listen, we got to get enough paint brushes. Everybody loves to paint, we don't want'em all fighting over who gets to paint first.

CONNIE: Will we ask some of the women?

MARY: We can't ask the men without their wives. Can you imagine Elvira if we asked Wayne without her? (THEY BOTH LAUGH, CARRIED AWAY WITH EXCITEMENT). Oh boy, I can't wait.

CONNIE: Tom? (SHE TURNS TO FIND HIM WATCHING THEM BOTH INTENTLY, THINKING. XING TO TOM). What you thinking, Tom? You think we're crazy?

TOM: (SLOWLY, THOUGHTFULLY). No. If this is what you really want, then you have to do it.

MARY: (STEP TOWARD TOM). And we can have the money?

TOM: Yes, I can transfer it to the Parents Activity Fund. But do you think you can buy a stereo for...whatever you'll have left?

MARY: (XING TO CHAIR #4 AND SITTING ON TABLE # 2). Secondhand? Sure. It don't have to be solid gold. Or maybe rent one. I don't worry about that. (CONNIE X'S TO MARY).

TOM: And this is what you parents really want?

MARY: (SLOWLY, EMPHATICALLY). We want anything that'll keep our kids out of trouble.

TOM: (WITH DECISION. ACCEDING TO THEM). O.K. It's a deal. You get the money, the Center gets the cupboards. (MARY AND CONNIE RISE AND GIVE A SHOUT OF PLEASURE). Well, I guess I call off Jim Rudy, Then. (LOOKS AT WRISTWATCH). It's three o'clock. (X'S ABOVE DESK #1 AND GETS JACKET). I'll go by now and tell him. Connie, I won't be back this afternoon. Lock up when you leave, will you?

CONNIE: Sure.

TOM: (XING DR.). So ...I'll leave the whole thing in your hands.

MARY: (WITH A GRIN). O.K. And thanks.

CONNIE: (VERY SINCERELY). Thank you, Tom.

TOM: O.K. (HE STARTS TO DOOR RIGHT. HIS STEPS SLOW DOWN, HE STOPS UNCERTAINLY, TURNS, OPENS HIS MOUTH TO SPEAK, DOESN'T).

MARY: (OBSERVING HIM, LAUGHS, WAVES HIM OFF AS SHE X'S BELOW DESK #1). Quit worrying. (TOM SMILES AND EXITS RIGHT).

MARY: (XING TO CONNIE). Oh, ain't this great, Connie. I can't wait to tell Elvira and Loretta, you know how worried they've been. And Lucy with her Anna.

CONNIE: You were just great, Mary. I was worried, but it turned out great.

MARY: He's real nice guy. Now let's see, how'll we get the word out?

CONNIE: Let's go make some coffee and talk about it.

MARY: We'll tell Elvira and Loretta first. And Lucy, if she'll come....(THEY EXIT LEFT TOGETHER, TALKING).

SCENE III

CONNIE: (COMES IN LEFT, SLOW AND DEPRESSED, DREADING WHAT'S COMING. SHE PUTS PURSE ON TABLE #2, REPLACES CHAIR TO "WINDOW" POSITION. LOOKS AROUND, X'S TO DESK #1, PICKS UP PHONE, DIALS. SPEAKS CAREFULLY, WORRIED). Hello, Mrs. Raymond? This is Connie...O.K., thanks. Is Tom there?...Is he on his way over?...You have a nice weekend?...That's good. Er.. Mrs. Raymond, have you...has Tom talked to anybody this morning...? Oh, nothing. ...Er...I'll let him tell you. (MARY COMES IN RIGHT, VERY DOWNCAST AND ANTICIPATING TROUBLE, X'S TO C). Mrs. Raymond, somebody's come in the office, will you excuse me? Goodbye. (HANGS UP, THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER).

MARY: He ain't here yet?

CONNIE: They just got back from the weekend. I guess he ain't heard. Unless he met somebody on the way over.

MARY: (HEARTFELT DREAD, SITS CHAIR #4). Oh God. I can just hear him.."I told you so." He'll be wild.

CONNIE: Oh, why couldn't we wait till he got back? He'd have known about paint rags and all that stuff.

MARY: Yeah, for once I wish he had been around.

CONNIE: It's even worse than you think, Mary. (XING TO MARY).

MARY: Worse?

CONNIE: We can't never get our stereo now. It's going to take fifty, seventy-five dollars to get that couch fixed.

MARY: How do you know?

CONNIE: I phoned a couple of stores on the way over here. They couldn't tell me exactly how much it would cost. They'd have to see it first. But it's going to cost plenty...<u>if</u> they can do it at all.

MARY: (INCREASING ALARM, RISES AND X'S TO CONNIE). <u>If</u>! You mean we might have to buy a whole new couch? Oh, My God, I'm scared to face him. (X'S L).

CONNIE: And beside that we've still got to buy enough lumber to make the other cupboard. (XING TO R OF TABLE # 2).

MARY: Oh, Connie! I tell you, that man is going to kill us. I wish...(THEY BOTH HEAR TOM WHISTLING OFF R. THEY STAND FROZEN, WAITING).

TOM: (ENTERS, NORMALLY GOOD HUMORED AND PLEASANT). 'Morning, Connie. Well, how are you, Mary? (CONNIE AND MARY NOD STIFFLY. "O.K." THEY WATCH HIM FOR CUES. TOM TAKES OFF JACKET, HANGS IT ON CHAIR, CHATTING ON). Gee, we had a wonderful weekend. (SITTING CHAIR #1). Wasn't it beautiful weather?

BOTH: (LOW, WATCHING). Lovely.

TOM: The kids had the time of their lives. My mother-in-law's sow had a litter of little pigs. The little characters were up and running in fifteen minutes. Too bad humans aren't that precocious.

CONNIE: Yeah.

TOM: (NOTICING THEIR SILENCE). What's your news? What brings you here so early, Mary?

CONNIE: Er....(DRIES UP).

MARY: Er....(DRIES UP).

TOM: You want something? Oh, did you get anywhere over the weekend...with the cupboards, I mean.

MARY: Er...yeah.

TOM: What did you decide?

MARY: Well, we..we went right ahead.

TOM: How do you mean?

MARY: Well, everybody was so excited. We found enough scrap lumber out at the lumber yard for one cupboard, so we bought it and got started.

TOM: That was fast work.

CONNIE: The men borrowed tools. And Saturday morning they began building it.

TOM: Actually began? (RISES EAGERLY). Let me go look. (X'S C).

CONNIE: (HASTILY TOUCHES HIS ARM). Wait. (HE STOPS . SHE GOES ON CAREFULLY). They got it up...under the windows.

MARY: It looked good, it really did.

CONNIE But...we were all crazy to get to the painting, so yesterday we painted.

TOM: So?

CONNIE: Tom, we was just amateurs, we didn't know that...if you left paint rags...and turpentine...in a bucket...

TOM: Oh, my God, was there a fire?

CONNIE: Yes.

TOM: How bad?

CONNIE: The couch.

TOM: But that's in the family room.

CONNIE: Yes, but...

TOM: I don't understand. How did it happen?

MARY: Well, when we was done painting we went in there to have coffee. Somebody set the bucket down behind the couch next to the radiator. And when we left we forgot it. There was some heat in the radiator and the whole thing just...went up.

TOM: Was anything else burned?

CONNIE: The bulletin board and the wall got scorched some. But the night watchman put the fire out. He tried to phone you, then he called me. And I've been lying awake all night, just scared to tell you.

MARY: Me too. I'm just sick. (TOM X'S TO BELOW TABLE #1).

CONNIE: And that ain't all, Tom. I've phoned some stores, and we might not even be able to get the couch repaired. We might have to buy you a new one.

MARY: And we've got to buy the wood for the other cupboard. We'll have to forget about the stereo. I know what you're thinking. You're thinking we had it coming.

TOM: (IN SURPRISE). No. I'm sorry about it, but Good Lord, anybody can have an accident.

MARY: Yeah, but...

TOM: Now cut it out. I wasn't thinking anything of the sort. I'm just wondering the best thing to do now. That stereo was too good an idea to pass up. (MARY AND CONNIE LOOK AT HIM SURPRISED AND PLEASED). Is the couch really ruined?

MARY: Well, the cover's shot. It's vinyl, you know.

TOM: What about the frame?

MARY: I guess that's all right.

CONNIE: But those stores said it might cost fifty, seventy-five dollars to get it re-done.

TOM: Oh, no, we'll have to find some other way than that. Let me go look at it. (HE STARTS OUT, AT DOOR HE STOPS, SNAPS HIS FINGER). Hey! Lucy Lee!

CONNIE AND MARY: Huh?

TOM: She used to work in an upholstery shop.

CONNIE: Long time ago. Before she was married.

TOM: I bet she could do it.

MARY: Aw, Tom!

TOM: Once you know a thing.

MARY: She never would.

TOM: We can at least ask her. Connie, don't you think so?

CONNIE: Wel'...Sure, let's ask her.

TOM: Let's see. Better not try to talk to her on the phone. (AS HE PUTS ON HIS JACKET). What's her address, Connie?

CONNIE: Corner Woodhaven and Styles.

TOM: (AS HE STARTS OUT LEFT). If anybody phones while I'm... (HE STOPS DL, THINKS. LOOKS AT THEM BOTH). Hey, what am I going out there for? This is your project. Mary, you and Connie go out and talk to her.

MARY: Me?

TOM: Sure. You're her friend, you got her involved here in the first place.

MARY: (HESITANT BUT WILLING, EVEN EAGER). What would we say?

TOM: Just tell her the truth...tell her how much we need her, that she's the only one that can help. You know...everybody likes to feel he's contributing something. I bet she'd get a kick out of being asked.

CONNIE: (LOOKS AT MARY). Shall we?

MARY: Sure.

TOM: That's great. So you take care of that. And I'll go look at the couch and see (WITH A HUMOROUS GRIN). what we're asking her to do. (EXITS LEFT).

MARY: (AFTER HE LEAVES, LOOKS AFTER HIM. WHISPERS). You could have knocked me down with a feather.

CONNIE: (WHISPERS) Me too.

MARY: He really is a great guy, you know it?

CONNIE: Of course he is. (THEY START OUT LEFT). Come on. (EXIT LEFT).

SCENE IV

TOM: (COMING IN WITH CONNIE AND MARY). But why wouldn't she? (X'S DR.).

MARY: (XING UC). Oh, she made a lot of excuses. Said first she wasn't going to come here no more, said you asked her last week and then when she did you wasn't here.

TOM: Oh. But I...

CONNIE: I've told her how it happened. I told her she was late and you had to see Mr. Rudy. (XING TO BELOW CHAIR #4).

MARY: Then she went on about how she hadn't worked in years, didn't have no tools...

CONNIE: ...wouldn't know how to work in vinyl anyway.

MARY: It was all just excuses.

CONNIE: Of course, you can't really blame her for feeling like it was too much. That husband lying there, crippled and sick, and all them kids racing around and you ought to have seen Anna. She just sat there, not doing a thing, just sat there listening. (SITTING ON DESK) Gosh, living like that would drive me nuts.

MARY: But it would have done her good. Everybody ought to get out of the house sometimes.

TOM: (XING TO MARY). You didn't put it to her that you were doing her a favor, did you?

MARY: Lord, no. We told her how much we needed her, how she was the only person we knew that could do it...how we'd all

help with baby-sitting and getting her back and forth. The works.

CONNIE: And we said we didn't expect a really professional job. Just good enough so we could use the couch.

MARY: And we told her what we was going to do with the money. How it would help everybody's kids.

CONNIE: You know, Mary, all those excuses...there wasn't one we couldn't answer. She could do it if she wanted. I think she just feels licked before she starts. (LUCY WALKS IN LEFT. ALL STARE AT HER IN AMAZEMENT. SHE SHOWS FIRST SIGNS OF ANIMATION, HER FACE HAS EXPRESSION. ALL TOGETHER, VARIATIONS OF THE CRY "Well, Lucy, for goodness' sake").

TOM: Lucy! Come in!

MARY: How'd you get here so fast?

LUCY: I come on the bus.

TOM: Well, this is great! So...? (ALL WAIT).

LUCY: (XING TO TOM). I'll do it if you think I can. (ALL THREE GIVE A SHOUT OF PLEASURE).

TOM: Of course you can.

CONNIE: Oh, Lucy, that's great.

MARY: (X'S TO LUCY). Luch, you're a doll. (PATS HER).

TOM: (TURNS CHAIR #1 AND MOVES IT CENTER). Sit down, Lucy. Tell us what Made you change your mind? (SITS EDGE OF TABLE #1).

LUCY: (SITS). Well, it was Anna.

CONNIE AND MARY: Anna?

LUCY: It was funny. You know, after you left she looked at me so queer.

CONNIE: How do you mean, queer? (SITS EDGE OF TABLE #2).

LUCY: Different..like..I don't know..like I was different. Like I wasn't dirt no more.

TOM: (SEEING THE SIGNIFICANCE). Uhhuh?

LUCY: And she say, Go on, Mom, I stay with the kids.

MARY: She didn't!

LUCY: Yeah. But I still didn't think I could. Then my husband called from the bedroom, who was you-all, what did you want, and I went in to tell him. He wasn't in very good shape, didn't want me to go. Then Anna come in, she say she stay there, and I ought to go. She said everybody wanted me, that I was the only one that knowed how to upholster, and that, the way you-all talked, I must be a real somebody.

TOM: That's right, Lucy, you are.

CONNIE: (STANDS). That's the most wonderful thing I ever heard.

MARY: It sure is.

LUCY: So...if you'll help me get here and all, I'll do the best I can.

MARY: (PUTS HER ARM AROUND HER AFFECTIONATELY). Lucy, we sure do thank you.

LUCY: Just a minute. (SHE MOVES UP TO "WINDOW"). I got to see

LUCY:
(CONT). what Tony is doing.

TOM: (WHILE SHE IS NOT LOOKING, HE MAKES THE "PERFECT" SIGN WITH THUMB AND FINGER AT MARY AND CONNIE. THEY SHAKE THEIR HEADS, MAKE IT BACK AT HIM EMPHATICALLY, POINTING THE CREDIT TO HIM, TOM THEN, DOING A DELAYED TAKE, SAYS). Tony? Is he here? (XING UP TO "WINDOW").

LUCY: (AT "WINDOW). He say if I come he wanted to come too. (SHE POINTS OUTSIDE. CONNIE AND MARY GO UP TO LOOK).

CONNIE: Will you look at that little rascal on that jungle gym!

TOM: He's a real little acrobat, Lucy.

MARY: Him and my Alexander seem to be making friends.

LUCY: I told him I wouldn't be gone long. I guess I better go see him. (XING DL.)

CONNIE: Sure...then come back. (LUCY EXITS LEFT).

MARY: (AFTER SHE IS OUT OF EARSHOT, X'S DOWN LEFT, SAYS IN AN AWED WHISPER TO THE OTHERS, WHO ARE EQUALLY AMAZED). Isn't that something?

CONNIE: (XING DC). Can you imagine...Anna! What a change!

TOM: (XING DOWNSTAGE). That's almost the best part of it.

MARY: I hope it'll last. She's a pretty tough kid.

TOM: But if she has <u>respect</u> for her mother...

MARY: Yeah. That makes a big difference.

CONNIE: But the change in Lucy! Like she was alive all of a sudden.

TOM: (XING BELOW TABLE #1). What she needs is...Hey!

CONNIE: What?

TOM: Well, you know, there are not very many people that can do upholstery. If you want repairs done, the big places charge you an arm and a leg. I was wondering ...

MARY: (THERE BEFORE HIM). I got it! (XING RIGHT A STEP).

TOM: (XING RIGHT OF TABLE #1). If we could help her learn the new tricks of the trade and then find her some work... The whole trouble is, she's been in a kind of trap. If we could just break the trap...you know what I mean?

CONNIE: Sure, that's it. (XING TWO STEPS RIGHT).

TOM: Just little jobs at first. But good handcraft work is hard to get, people will really pay for it. The main thing is, it would be great for her psychologically.

MARY: (TO CONNIE, LAUGHING, KIDDING). There he goes with them big words.

TOM: (NOT UNDERSTANDING THE REFERENCE). What?

CONNIE: (LAUGHING). She's just kidding. She said you used big words.

TOM: (KIDDING BACK). Well, I've got to impress you <u>some</u> way. (SEES LUCY COMING IN, X'S BELOW TABLE #1). Oh, Lucy, Did you find Tony?

LUCY: Yes. (SHE IS LOOKING VERY PLEASED). And you know? (XING TO TOM.) I was just standing there watching them play, and the teacher she come up and spoke to me. And Tony come running up and he say to the teacher, 'Look, my Mom come to Head Start too.'

TOM: He did?

LUCY: And the teacher say, Yeah, that's good. And then he run back to the sand box and start playing with the other kids. And the teacher say, You watch, I b'lieve he stay here now.

TOM: Well, isn't that great. I bet he will, too.

LUCY: I'spose. Well, if I'm gonna work on the couch, can I go see how bad it is?

TOM: Sure, come on. (STARTS LUCY TO EXIT LEFT). Let's all go...let's all constitute ourselves an advisory committee.

MARY: (LAUGHING, AS THEY GO). Oh-oh, watch them big words. Don't be scared, Lucy, he ain't no smarter than the rest of us. He just knows more. (THEY GO OUT LEFT LAUGHING GOOD HUMOREDLY).

The premiere performance in Los Angeles was on November 3, 1969 at the Statler Hilton Hotel by the Southern California PLAYS for LIVING cast, directed by Livia Granito.

The regional premiere in New Orleans was at the Jung Hotel on November 17, 1969, directed by Dorothy Sands and performed by the following professional New York cast:

Tom	James Burr
Connie	Lea Scott
Lucy	Luna Catarevas
Mary	Juanita Bethea

Stage Manager Elizabeth Council